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<p>Monday, September 17, 2007 02:35 PM</p> <p><b><i>TF Raven Crew Chief Saves A Life in the Desert</i></b>  story by Sgt. Benjamin Cossel, photos provided by TF Raven</p> <p>YUMA, Ariz. — Aug. 12 started out like any other day for Army Sgt. Louis Garcia, a UH-60 Black Hawk crew chief with Task Force Raven, Operation Jump Start – Arizona. His mission for the day complete, he and the crew of Raven 48 were heading home to the Papago Park Military Reservation in Phoenix when the Border Patrol Search, Trauma and Rescue (BORSTAR) agent that the crew worked with called them on a cell phone. The call diverted Raven 48, forcing them back to Yuma and would put Garcia's combat life saving (CLS) training to the test.</p>  <p>"At approximately 11:20 A.M., we received a call on the cell phone from our BORSTAR agent that both CBP (U.S. Customs and Border Protection) ground and air units were working on a group of distressed UDA's (undocumented aliens) approximately 30 miles east of the Yuma Airport," said TF Raven operations officer and pilot for Raven 48, Army Maj. Perry Jones.</p> <p>Initially the crew was told to stand by but be ready at a moments notice.</p> <p>"I began quickly configuring the aircraft to carry a litter," said Garcia. "Border patrol said they'd found four UDA's who had told them two more were unaccounted for, the Tucson, Ariz. resident said. "I wanted to make sure the aircraft was prepared in case we had to assist."</p> <p>According to a Yuma sector CBP news release, there were 27 UDA deaths from Oct. 31, 2005 through July 31, 2006 and 11 in the same period 2006-2007. Temperatures in the barren desert spanning the U.S.-Mexico border had routinely burst the mercury in the prior days, hitting upwards of 120 degrees with Aug. 12 being no exception. At 12:50 P.M., Raven 48 got the call to assist, mounted up and joined the rescue operation.</p> <p>Once the crew got on-site, they began performing low-level reconnaissance of the area, searching for the missing individual. For 30 minutes Raven 48 circled in a desperate attempt to locate the distressed UDA and then, BORSTAR called again – both UDAs were found one was ok, the other needed medical attention.</p> <p>"BORSTAR had found the distressed UDA in a wash and beneath a bush," said Jones. "Our crew executed a low recon of the landing site and then performed the approach and landing."</p> <p>Almost immediately, the BORSTAR agent motioned for Garcia to assist.</p> <p>"I hurried out of the aircraft with water and the medical kit," Garcia said. "The guy didn't look good - real lethargic, he had no idea what was going on around him, he just kept asking for water, he was obviously suffering from dehydration."</p> <p>Garcia began giving the UDA small sips of water as the BORSTAR agent tried to get an IV started.</p> <p>"The BORSTAR agent was having a hard time finding a vein," said Garcia. "When he finally did find one, he tried to insert the needle but missed."</p> <p>The BORSTAR agent tried again, missing again leaving the rescuers with only one needle.</p> <p>"I told the BORSTAR agent I was a CLS, having been trained prior to my deployment to Iraq," said Garcia. "I asked him if he wanted me to give it a try."</p> <p>The BORSTAR agent told Garcia to go ahead as he headed back to the helicopter to get more supplies.</p> <p>With just one needle left, Garcia knew this was a "go/no-go" situation with a man's life hanging in the balance.</p> <p>"I took a look at both his arms and thought the one on the right had a better vein, and I just went for it and got it," said Garcia.</p> <p>With the IV successfully in the patient, the BORSTAR agent and Garcia secured him on the Black Hawk for transport to a medical facility.</p>				

"We'd put three bags into him before we even got to the hospital," Garcia said.

Arriving at the hospital, the crew of Raven 48 waited for the BORSTAR agent to deliver the patient and then returned home. Since the beginning of Operation Jump Start in May 2006, TF Raven has participated in 36 rescue operations with CBP but this was a first for Garcia.

"You hear about them," Garcia said. "But this was the first time I'd actually participated in one. I talked to the BORSTAR agent later and he told me the guy made it, that definitely made me feel good."

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